THE FACULTY OFFICE

THE FACULTY OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

NOTARIES (PRACTISING CERTIFICATE) RULES 2012

Consultation on Practice Fees 2026/27 and Business Plan 2025-28 progress update

FACULTY OFFICE RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

The Faculty Office (FO) launched its consultation on the proposed level of practising certificate fees on 6th August 2026 which ran until 28th August 2026. The consultation document (Appendix A) was emailed to every practising notary in England & Wales together with other stakeholders and it also appeared on the FO website. The Registrar and Chief Clerk also hosted an online drop-in forum on 12th August but only two notaries took advantage of this offer.

The consultation elicited 11 substantive written responses from individual notaries (a 12th response simply stated "I am retiring with effect from 31st October 2026, so have no view on this"). Anonymised copies of the individual responses received are included in Appendix B.

The Headlines

Whilst the overall number of responses was similar to last year but still a little lower than in recent years, the FO was nevertheless pleased with the positive nature of the engagement from the regulated community. There was unanimous support for maintaining the PCF at 2025/26 levels and a significant majority support for maintaining a nil-rate Contingency Fund contribution (9:2). There was broad support for the progress report against our three-year business plan alongside a number of constructive suggestions for taking other proposals forward.

The Detail

Practising certificate fee

The FO proposals are set out in the table below:

Turnover band (with anticipated % of the profession in band)	Current PCF for year 2025/26	Proposed PCF for year 2026/27	Proposed PCF as % of average turnover	Change over current PCF
£0 to £5,000 (12.3%)	£360	£360	27.27%	+ £0
£5,001 to £15,000 (23.8%)	£560	£560	5.22%	+ £0

£15,001 to £50,000 (36.2%)	£695	£695	2.50%	+ £0
£50,001 to £90,000 (14.3%)	£1,000	£1,000	1.19%	+ £0
£90,001 to £150,000 (4.4%)	£1,665	£1,665	0.97%	+ £0
£150,001 to £300,000 (4.4%)	£2,000	£2,000	0.61%	+ 0
Over £300,000 (4.6%)	£4,165	£4,165	0.49%	+ £0

There was unanimous support for the above proposals which we are, therefore, taking forward.

Contingency fund

Whilst nine out of the eleven respondents agreed with the proposal not to collect a contribution to the Contingency Fund the other two made the same point about the benefits and discipline of collecting a small contribution (between £10-£30) annually to keep building the fund to 'save for a rainy day' and guard against 'significant legal action…in the future which requires a significant outlay.' Noting that 'there is a significant cohort who (now) regard it as normal to have a nil-rate, rather than a privilege.' We note and accept these suggestions and will likely resume an annual contribution from 2027/28.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion impact

We did not include an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment as part of the consultation this year given that no change was proposed and about which none of the respondents had any comment in last year's consultation. The substantive application to the LSB will, of course, include an Assessment.

2025/28 Business plan progress update

As can be seen from Appendix B, respondents were unanimous in their appreciation of the work which the FO has undertaken in the first year of its new triennial Business Plan. Three respondents have provided some helpful 'food for thought' which the FO will reflect on over the coming months.

The FO does endeavour to regulate in a proportionate manner and has regularly raised the issue of 'one size fits all' requirements with our oversight regulator requiring work to be carried out to 'fix' problems that may very well not be relevant to our regulated community making the point that the 'legal profession' is, in fact, made up of a number of quite distinct separate professions amongst which notaries are unique in a number of respects – this is not always 'heard'. However, the FO is pleased to note the new approach to regulation set out by the Legal Services Board which expressly moves away from a "one-size-fits-all prescriptive approach to regulation to a more risk based approach" and looks forward to the practical outworking of this new regime.

Whilst the FO does not have, and has never had, representative functions and regulation is primarily aimed at consumer protection, we continue to endeavour to balance those protections in a proportionate manner.

The Faculty Office
September 2026

APPENDIX A

THE FACULTY OFFICE

Business Plan Update and Consultation on Practising Certificate Fees 2026-2027

THE FACULTY OFFICE

THE FACULTY OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE AND PRACTISING CERITIFICATE FEE CONSULTATION

2026-2027

Summary

A summary of the activities of the Faculty Office in the financial year 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 has been published in the form of the Registrar's Annual Report. The accounts, contingency fund account and a table showing the Cost of Regulation in a format prescribed by the Legal Services Board in accordance with their "Principles of Costs Transparency" guidance will be published shortly.

This paper reviews progress against the three-year business plan over the last year and looks ahead to expected activity for the period 1st October 2026 – 31st August 2027 and:

- Sets out the main priorities for the period 1st October 2025 – 31st August 2028 (page 2).
- Puts forward a proposal for raising income from practising certificate fees for the period 1st November 2026 – 31st October 2027 as a public consultation (page 8).
- Incorporates a three-year budget for the years 2026-2029 (page 13).

The consultation (which begins on page 8) will close **at 5pm on 28 August 2026.**

The Master's priorities

The Faculty Office's current three-year business plan was launched in September 2025. We are entering the second year of that plan. The priorities the Master were set in 2025. Some have been accomplished – e.g. the review of the disciplinary arrangements and the consolidation of the accounts rules. Others are work in progress.

Slightly confusingly, perhaps, the business plan began in September 2025 and ends in August 2028, even though our financial year is April to March and the practising year is November to October. This however fits in with the "back to school" nature of each autumn, as notaries apply for their new practising certificates and the Notaries Society have their annual conference. It also allows us to look back on the financial year just gone and plan on setting the fees required for the practising certificates, which we consult on in the summer, and which begin to be paid in October of each year.

It would be unwise to keep on adding to the priorities, when earlier ones still need to be delivered, and when there is a good deal of day to day work that is not mentioned in the business plan at all because it is not headline grabbing. However, the opportunities and challenges that we as regulator and the profession of notaries are confronted with do not neatly fit within any one business planning cycle and we have to be ready to reorient the existing priorities we have, and to rise to the new opportunities and challenges that come to us.

The existing priorities remain, namely:

1. Practice authorisation
2. Review of Insurance arrangements
3. Review of the disciplinary arrangements
4. Consolidation of the accounts rules
5. Development of an outcomes framework
6. Professional ethics
7. Review inspections work
8. Diversity
9. Post-qualification of supervision of conveyancing and probate
10. Wellbeing
11. Rule of law lectures
12. Access to justice
13. Wales
14. Artificial intelligence and new technologies

Some of these priorities have been achieved and will now be the subject of ongoing monitoring, some have been started and will be completed within the triennium of the current business plan and others will be, and remain, ongoing with no definitive end date. A brief update on each of the priorities is set out below:

1. Practice authorisation

What is it? Under section 69 of the Legal Services Act 2007 the Faculty Office can be empowered to authorise and regulate practices (such as companies and partnerships) to do notarial work, as well as individuals. A statutory instrument would be made by the Lord Chancellor on the application of the Legal Services Board which would make changes to the legislation under which the Master of Faculties regulates notaries.

Where have we got to? We continue to engage with the LSB and this has been helpful in establishing their expectations for obtaining the powers and their implementation, where necessary. We have engaged a consultant who helped to steer CILEX Regulation's entity regulation application to review where we have got to, to check our assumptions and to assist with the preparation of a formal consultation document outlining our vision for what practise authorisation will look like and how an incremental implementation of the powers would work for us.

2. Review of insurance arrangements

What is it? Notaries are required to hold a minimum level of professional indemnity insurance cover; that insurance cover should be appropriate to their work. Insurance cover is monitored by the Faculty Office. It is proposed that more prescriptive rules setting out the minimum terms that insurance policies must contain be made. This might include a requirement to hold run-off cover in case a claim emerges after the notary has retired.

Where have we got to? We have undertaken research to put together a proposal, working with an expert in the insurance industry (who understands the notarial insurance market) which has enabled us to work up a draft consultation which will be launched in the Autumn of 2026.

3. Review of disciplinary arrangements

What is it? The proposals are broadly to amend and replace the Notaries (Conduct & Discipline) Rules 2015 (as amended) with a new set of rules which would: • split out the functions of investigative and prosecution presently carried out by the Nominated Notary and allow non-notaries to discharge those functions; • bring in new administrative powers which could be used instead of or in addition to disciplinary sanctions imposed by the Commissary Court; • allow notaries to agree to penalties with a view to shortening the disciplinary procedure in appropriate cases; • produce guidance on penalties; •make permanent the interim provision which allows evidence to be taken by simultaneous videoconference; • tidying up and harmonising rules regulating the respective roles of Registrar, investigator and prosecutor; and •create a new "overriding objective" much as applies to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

Where have we got to? The new rules and guidance have been approved by the LSB and published on our website and came into effect on 1st May 2026. We will now monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the new rules in dealing with complaints in a timely, fair and consistent manner.

4. Consolidation of accounts rules

What is it? We will continue to review our regulatory arrangements for notaries' accounts with particular emphasis on the three sets of accounts rules: the Notaries Accounts Rules 1989 (as amended), the Notaries' Accounts (Deposit Interest) Rules 1989 and the Notaries Trust Accounts Rules 1989. Specifically we will seek to consolidate them which will make them easier to follow and more practical to use.

Where have we got to? The new rules and guidance have been approved by the LSB and published as the Notaries (Accounts) Rules 2026 which came into effect on 1st July 2026. The new rules do not make any changes to the requirements on notaries but are easier to follow. We will monitor their effectiveness and have committed to a formal review in the next business plan triennium period.

5. Develop an outcomes framework

What is it? Much good work is done by the Faculty Office but to meet current best practice standards as well as to be helpful we should devise and use a framework by which the outcomes of its projects can be assessed. A way of better measuring the impact of Faculty Office projects by measuring more reliably and proportionately whether its objectives are being achieved.

Where have we got to? The senior staff team of the Faculty Office held a consultant-led away day at which the principal focus was the development of this framework and what it needed to achieve. The outcomes from that day are being written up for presentation and approval by the Master in the Autumn with implementation as a pilot in early 2027.

6. Professional ethics

What is it? We will explore how the Faculty Office can promote professional ethics amongst notaries with a view to providing resources which enable notaries to reflect on the application of professional ethics in their day to day work, e.g. observing the independence of a notary, avoiding and managing conflicts of interest etc as well as embedding ethics into training.

Where have we got to? We have published guidance on the importance of independence and impartiality. We have commissioned materials to assist notaries to reflect upon professional ethics in their work. In addition, UCL have designed an extra module for prospective notaries in training covering professional ethics.

7. Review inspections work

What is it? Inspections provide the front line of investigation into the work of notaries through a combination of remote and onsite inspections by senior notaries commissioned by the Faculty Office on a risk assessed basis. We are considering whether inspections are working well and whether anything can be improved.

Where have we got to? We have commissioned an external review of the current inspections regime.

8. Diversity

What is it? The development of a standalone diversity action plan spanning the diversity of the profession and EDI as it affects Access to Justice. (see also point 12). To ensure diversity of all kinds amongst the profession by tackling blockages where possible and also ensuring that the Faculty Office boards contain members who have experience of the diverse character of UK society. To address aspects of EDI as they affect Access to Justice across the wide range of the general public, enabling the profession to serve all consumers with equality and inclusivity. A diverse profession is a flourishing profession, and one well placed to serve the consumer That service must be equally available to all.

Where have we got to? We have published the report of an external consultant who undertook primary research during late 2025 from which a number of proposals were put forward and which form an action plan for further research into understanding the principal issues and concerns of notaries and consumers of notarial services within the fields of diversity, equality and inclusion.

9. Post-qualification supervision of probate and conveyancing

What is it? To ensure the right level of supervision for new notaries who are practicing in probate and/or conveyancing. We have identified probate and conveyancing as two high risk areas, particularly as they involve the handling of client money and valuable assets. To ensure that the level of supervision is correct. To manage risk and make sure that notaries working in these fields have the best possible start in their early years of practice as a notary.

Where have we got to? We carried out a call for evidence during 2024 and a more formal consultation based on the evidence submitted in early 2026. We are collating the wide range of responses submitted with a view to refining our proposals and submitting the draft new rules to the LSB in the late Autumn of 2026.

10. Wellbeing

What is it? The wellbeing of notaries includes their physical and mental health and it will be one of our ongoing priorities. Most notaries are sole practitioners as regard their notarial work and that can lead to isolation and an inability to "bounce-off" ideas with other professionals. Poor wellbeing including that brought about by isolation can lead to impaired judgement and poor decision making, and a decline in the standard of care given to clients. There is a link here with professional ethics.

Where have we got to? We have asked an external consultant to prepare a paper on possible wellbeing frameworks linking back to the argument that notaries can only deliver services with efficiency, consistency and sustainability if they have good wellbeing.

11. Rule of law lectures

What is it? Holding an annual lecture on the rule of law or legal education. An annual lecture which brings together notaries, their regulator and others to hear from a distinguished speaker on a topical subject.

Where have we got to? Previous rule of law lectures have provided inspiration and impetus to the work of the Faculty Office and have been an opportunity to convey important messages to notaries in person in a social atmosphere. We propose to continue this initiative and this year's lecture will be given by Professor Eloise Scotford on the subject of "The future of legal education".

12. Access to justice

What is it? Seeking to make notaries more accessible to a range of consumers with different needs, economic circumstances and geographical locations. A geographical spread of notaries (or provision for those services to be given at a distance) and notaries offering services affordably to avoid "deserts" of notarial services. Also, increasing public understanding of what a notary does and when a notary is needed. The delivery of notarial services in a way which responds to the EDI needs of the consumers and that regulatory focus and professional standards reflect this .

Where have we got to? We have commissioned and finalised review of EDI by independent research team, focusing primarily on different needs, but picking up some aspects of economic circumstances. We also intend to prepare an analysis by region of where notaries are available, considering how geographically local they need to be and compare this to probable need for services (if these can be ascertained from public records).

13. Wales

What is it? The Faculty Office is responsible for regulating notaries in England and Wales however we recognise that regulation can be "England-centric". To ensure that the Faculty Office is fully catering for the needs of Welsh notaries and consumers of notarial services in Wales and in the Welsh language. The Faculty Office is established to regulate notaries both in England and Wales and so separate attention at Wales specific opportunities and challenges is important to us.

Where have we got to? We have recruited a Welsh speaking professional as a consultant to work with the Faculty Office to assess which of the Faculty Office's principal means of communication should be in Welsh as well as in English and to determine a plan for widening Welsh representation on the Boards. We have introduced a translation module into our website which allows the site itself (but not yet the embedded documents) to be translated, amongst other key languages, into Welsh. This is another priority which will be ongoing with no defined end-date.

14. Artificial intelligence and new technology

What is it? Technology is moving apace in the fields of digital commerce and artificial technology. Developments in technology can supplant traditional ways of doing business such as meeting clients in person and by automating processes traditionally carried out by people.

Where have we got to? The AI and New Technology working party meets regularly. Three new chapters for the code of practice have been published covering:

1. Technology, Digital Devices and Artificial Intelligence
2. Electronic Documents and Electronic Notarial Acts
3. Remote Appearance

This will, clearly, be an ongoing initiative and priority as technology continues to develop.

A word on the budgets

Annex I provides a breakdown of the notarial surplus and deficit position, whilst Annex II sets out the budgets for the current financial year and the following two financial years, ending 31 March 2027, 2028 and 2029.

Our overall approach is to raise through practising certificate fees (PCFs) the income required to fund our day-to-day work of appointing, equipping and regulating notaries, including delivery of the 14 priority areas set out above. Much of this expenditure is incurred through the management charge, which funds the staffing and infrastructure supporting our regulatory work.

The three-year budgets have been prepared on a prudent and deliberately conservative basis. The budget for the current year assumes no increase in the PCF, recognising both the fee increases made in previous years and the wider cost pressures facing businesses and consumers. This is possible because our operating reserves are currently higher than the level required by our Reserves Policy, which is equivalent to approximately six months' expenditure. For the following two years, the budgets assume annual increases of 3.5% in both the PCF and expenditure, with the detailed proposals to be subject to consultation in each relevant year.

All three years show a budgeted accounting deficit. The budgets include £50,000 each year ring-fenced for significant investment in IT-infrastructure. For the current year, these conservative assumptions result in a budgeted deficit of just under £22,000 which will be funded from reserves. The deficit budgets for the three-year period consequently represent the planned and controlled use of available resources, alongside prudent provision for future IT investment and other potential costs. On current assumptions, they will enable us to deliver our regulatory priorities without increasing the PCF in the current year, while the modest increases anticipated in the following two years should maintain operating reserves within the parameters of the Reserves Policy.

THE FACULTY OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

NOTARIES (PRACTISING CERTIFICATE) RULES 2012

Consultation on Practising Certificate Fees 2026/27

The Faculty Office is consulting on its proposals for the annual practising certificate fee for the year 2026/27 to fund the regulatory work of the Faculty Office. The consultation will close at 5pm on 28 August 2026.

Introduction and background

- Practising Certificate Fee (PCF) for the 20026/27 practising year

We are pleased to confirm that the good financial position of the regulatory arm of the Faculty Office has been maintained as a result of prudent budgeting and expenditure controls and the end of year accounts for the year ending has resulted in a net surplus after tax in the year end accounts (year ending 31 March 2026) of £57,668. This was better than the anticipated budgeted deficit for the year of £2,809 but £50,000 of this 'surplus' was the first tranche of a ring-fenced IT project reserve with the remainder (£7,668) being made up of a combination of greater than budgeted income and lower expenditure in some areas. The accrued surplus now stands at £418,902 (which includes the £50,000 ring-fenced fund) and the net surplus of £368,902 is broadly in line with our current operating reserve policy goal of six months expenditure.

Following reviews of the banding system for PCF, Notaries will recall that we have introduced two additional bands splitting the original £0 to £15,000 and £50,000 to £150,000 band into two: namely £0 to £5,000 and £5,000 to £15,000; and £50,001 - £90,000 and £90,001 to £150,000 – both moves were welcomed by the profession.

PRACTISING CERTIFICATE FEE PROPOSALS FOR THE 2026/27 PRACTISING CERTIFICATE YEAR

The principal source of income to fund the regulatory work of the Faculty Office is, of course, the annual practising certificate fee (PCF) – amounting to some 89% of our income in 2025/26. PCF income may only be spent on one or more of the permitted purposes[1] which are:

(a) the regulation, accreditation, education and training of relevant authorised persons and those wishing to become such persons, including—

[1] See S.51(4) Legal Services Act 2007

(i) the maintaining and raising of their professional standards, and

(ii) the giving of practical support, and advice about practice management, in relation to practices carried on by such persons;

(b) the payment of a levy imposed on the approved regulator under section 173;

(c) the participation by the approved regulator in law reform and the legislative process;

(d) the provision by relevant authorised persons, and those wishing to become relevant authorised persons, of reserved legal services, immigration advice or immigration services to the public free of charge;

(e) the promotion of the protection by law of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(f) the promotion of relations between the approved regulator and relevant national or international bodies, governments or the legal professions of other jurisdictions.

The majority (in excess of 90%) of the PCF income is spent on (a); the levy paid to the LSB and OLC accounts for 3.8% and the levy paid to OPBAS accounts for a further 1.4% with the remainder split between (c) and (f).

Current position

The fees for 2025/26 were:

Table 1

Turnover band	Anticipated percentage of notaries in band	Proposed PCF for year 2025/26	PCF as % of average turnover disclosed at 2024/25 renewal	Change over previous PCF (2024/25)
£0 to £5,000	13.30	£360	19.46%	+ £35
£5,001 to £15,000	21.64	£560	5.45%	+ £55
£15,001 to £50,000	34.29	£695	2.34%	+ £70
£50,001 to £90,000	16.17	£1,000	1.44%	+ £100
£90,001 to £150,000	6.13	£1,665	1.46%	+ £165

£150,001 to £300,000	3.13	£2,000	0.94%	+ £200
Over £300,000	5.34	£4,165	0.78%	+ £415

This generated an income of £699,480 (up significantly from £592,009 the previous year even taking account of the broadly 11% uplift).

In the practising certificate year 2020/21 the Faculty Office lowered the contribution to the Contingency Fund for all notaries from £20 to £0. This was possible due to the recovery of costs in disciplinary cases ordered to be repaid to the Contingency Fund resulting in the fund maintaining a healthy balance. We were able to maintain the zero contribution in each of the subsequent years. We are pleased to report that non-recoverable expenditure on disciplinary cases has remained low and we are once again not proposing to seek a Continency Fund contribution with the fund currently standing at £129,000.

Proposals for practising certificate year 2026/27

Contingency Fee

The Faculty Office Contingency Fund balance at 31 March 2026 stands at £129,000, a net reduction of £16,270 on the previous year and slightly below our target fund of £150,000 but anticipated recoveries should go some way to restoring this balance. Although there are a small number of disciplinary cases and investigations pending, as indicated above, the Master does not consider it necessary to add to the Contingency Fund balance in this practising certificate year and intends to maintain the Contingency Fund contribution at £0 across all bands. However, we will likely be seeking a small contribution from each notary in the 2027/28 practising year.

Practising Certificate Fee (PCF)

As already indicated above, due to prudent budgeting and controlled expenditure, we have achieved our aim of building up an operating reserve for the regulatory arm of the Faculty Office. The gross operating reserve currently stands at £418,902 which is a little under seven months of the budgeted expenditure for the current year.

Draft budgets for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 are annexed to this consultation (Annex II). Whilst inflation appears to be back to target levels, interest rates remain relatively high and the Legal Services Board's expectations of frontline regulators across a range of work streams continue to challenge us with the need to increase the resources allocated to the regulatory arm of our operation. This resulted in a re-alignment of the proportion of staff time spent on regulatory matters as compared with the ecclesiastical arm from 71% to 79% and this is likely to continue in the short to medium term notwithstanding HM Treasury's decision to transfer Anti-Money Laundering Supervision from the Faculty Office (and all the other Professional Body Supervisors) to the Financial Conduct Authority. However, the Master has, in consultation with the Senior Staff Team and her Audit Committee, determined that no increase in the PCF is required for the year 2026/27 which we hope will be welcomed. We do not anticipate being able to hold the level next year but will, we hope, be in a position to limit any increase in line with inflation.

Table 2:

Turnover band (with anticipated % of the profession in band)	Current PCF for year 2025/26	Proposed PCF for year 2026/27	Proposed PCF as % of average turnover	Change over current PCF
£0 to £5,000 (12.3%)	£360	£360	27.27%	+ £0
£5,001 to £15,000 (23.8%)	£560	£560	5.22%	+ £0
£15,001 to £50,000 (36.2%)	£695	£695	2.50%	+ £0
£50,001 to £90,000 (14.3%)	£1,000	£1,000	1.19%	+ £0
£90,001 to £150,000 (4.4%)	£1,665	£1,665	0.97%	+ £0
£150,001 to £300,000 (4.4%)	£2,000	£2,000	0.61%	+ 0
Over £300,000 (4.6%)	£4,165	£4,165	0.49%	+ £0

We are keen to hear from notaries as to whether they support the proposal to freeze the PCF and contingency fund contribution at last year's rates for the forthcoming year.

Working with the Faculty Office

The Faculty Office will welcome enquiries from individual notaries on how they are to calculate their annual turnover. In essence we define turnover as gross fees/profit costs received net of disbursements charged to clients for the provision of notarial services and other legal services when acting *qua* notary.

Sole practitioners practising though a company (or other corporate structure) will be treated as having generated the declared turnover personally.

The Faculty Office is confident that notaries will act with integrity when assessing their own turnover and agreeing the amount with those notaries with whom they are in partnership. But we are seeking your views.

THE FACULTY OFFICE

4 August 2026

HOW TO RESPOND

Please respond in writing by 5pm on 28th August 2026 to The Faculty Office:

By email to: consultations@1thesanctuary.com

Please put "PRACTICE FEES AND BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE" in the subject line of your email

By post to: The Faculty Office, 1 The Sanctuary, Westminster, SW1P 3JT

Questions about the proposed business plan and the proposed practising certificate fee/levy

1	**Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?**
2	**Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.**
3	**Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?**
4	**Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?**

ZOOM – Consultation Drop-in meeting

Howard Dellar (Registrar) and Neil Turpin (Chief Clerk) will once again be hosting an online 'drop-in' via Zoom to discuss any aspect of the proposals set out in this Consultation between 11am and 12 noon on Tuesday 11th August. A link to the meeting is set out below.

Topic: PCF Consultation - Drop-In Session

Time: 11 August 2026 11:00 AM (London)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87599141592?pwd=dLEEvJuFIMeBUUyn1D8o5QPztvmS9F.1

Meeting ID: 875 9914 1592

Passcode: 066303

Annex I– Faculty Office breakdown of the notarial surplus

BREAKDOWN OF NOTARIAL ACCUMULATED (DEFICIT) SURPLUS @ 31/3/2026 & PROJECTED FIGURES FOR YEARS 2026/27; 2027/28; 2028/29

		£
Retained surplus @ 31/12/2006		6,033.00
Y/e 31/12/2007	Deficit	-15,764.00
Y/e 31/12/2008	Deficit	-26,090.00
Y/e 31/12/2009	Surplus	15,767.00
Y/e 31/12/2010	Surplus	2,412.00
Y/e 31/12/2011	Surplus	28,260.00
Y/e 31/12/2012	Deficit	-3,534.00
Y/e 31/12/2013	Surplus	20,119.00
Y/e 31/12/2014	Adjusted Deficit following change to accruals based accounting	-268,549.00
Y/e 31/12/2015	Surplus	6,220.00
15 months ended 31/03/2017	Surplus	26,383.00
Y/e 31/03/2018	Surplus	9,886.00
Y/e 31/03/2019	Deficit	-10,945.00
Y/e 31/03/2020	Deficit	-33,194.00
Y/e 31/03/2021	Surplus	125,790.00
Y/e 31/03/2022	Surplus (incl. yr. 1 levy)	207,279.00
Y/e 31/03/2023	Surplus (incl. yr. 2 levy)	182,643.00
Y/e 31/03/2024	Surplus	23,848.00
Y/e 31/03/2025	Surplus	64,670.00
Y/e 31/03/2026	Surplus	57,668
Accumulated surplus @ 31/3/2026		**£418,902**
Y/e 31/03/2027	Projected Deficit	(22,064.00)
Y/e 31/03/2028	Projected Deficit (based on 3.5% PCF uplift)	(17,070.00)
Y/e 31/03/2029	Projected Deficit (based on 3.5% PCF uplift	(15,781.00)
Projected accumulated surplus @ 31/3/2029		**£367,716.00**

(Projected expenditure for y/e 31/3/2029: 6 months £451,636.50
12 months £903,273.00

Annex II - Faculty Office Budgets 2026/27, 2027/28 & 2028/29

NOTARIES 2026/27			
Income:			
Practising Certificates: England & Wales & Overseas			
Accrued income April-October 2026	311,313		
785 certificates Nov 2026-March 2027	435,838		

		747,151	
Channel Islands Registrations:			
Accrued income April-December 2026	9,829		
60 Registrations @ £300 (Jan-March 2027)	4,500		

		14,329	
UK Appointments			
45 x £650		29,250	
Overseas Appointments			
15 x £825		12,375	
Certificates of Exemption 100 @ £175		17,500	
Investment Income (£300k investment)		10,000	

Total Income		**830,605**	
Less Expenditure:			
Management Charge (79%)	437,989		
Direct Expenditure	414,680		

Total Expenditure		**852,669**	

Projected Notaries Deficit 2026/27			**(22,064)**
			==========

NOTARIES 2027/28

Income:			
Practising Certificates:			
England & Wales & Overseas			
Accrued income April-October 2027	451,092		
785 certificates Nov 2027-March 2028	322,209		

		773,301	
Channel Islands Registrations:			
Accrued income April-December 2027	13,500		
60 Registrations @ £300 (Jan-March 2028)	4,500		

		18,000	
UK Appointments			
45 x £650		29,250	
Overseas Appointments			
15 x £825		12,375	
Certificates of Exemption 100 @ £175		17,500	
Investment Income (£300k investment)		10,000	

Total Income		**860,426**	
Less Expenditure:			
Management Charge (79%)	453,318		
Direct Expenditure	424,178		

Total Expenditure		**877,496**	

Projected Notaries Deficit 2027/28			**(17,070)**
			==========

NOTARIES 2028/29

Income:			
Practising Certificates:			
England & Wales & Overseas			
Accrued income April-October 2028	466,881		
785 certificates Nov 2028-March 2029	333,486		

		800,367	
Channel Islands Registrations:			
Accrued income April-December 2028	13,500		
60 Registrations @ £300 (Jan-March 2029)	4,500		

		18,000	
UK Appointments			
45 x £650		29,250	
Overseas Appointments			
15 x £825		12,375	
Certificates of Exemption 100 @ £175		17,500	
Investment Income (£300k investment)		10,000	

Total Income		**887,492**	
Less Expenditure:			
Management Charge (79%)	469,185		
Direct Expenditure	434,088		

Total Expenditure		**903,273**	

Projected Notaries Deficit 2028/29			**(15,781)**
			==========

APPENDIX B

PRACTICE FEES AND BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Response #1

I am retiring with effect from 31 October 2026, so have no view on this.

K, a notary

Response #2

Please find below my responses to the practice fees and business plan consultation:

1. **Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?**

As to the Practising Certificate fee, yes.

As to the contingency fund, no.

2. **Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.**

Given the very small amount of any contribution from each notary but the difference that can make over a number of years, it would seem to be sensible to keep building up the fund both to address the effects of inflation and to ensure a sufficient fund is built up in case significant legal action is required in the future which requires a significant outlay, which could otherwise largely deplete the current fund.

3. **Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?**

It is welcome that significant progress has been made in relation to (i) the review of disciplinary arrangements (Priority 3) and (ii) the consolidation of accounts rules (Priority 4).

It is also welcome news that practice authorisation (Priority 1) is once again being actively addressed. It would be helpful for the profession to understand the likely timetable of any consultation, application for powers and possible implementation of rules. This is a significant gap in the regulation of the profession and progress on this point should be a priority (amongst the priorities) for the Faculty Office for the remainder of the triennium.

As to post-qualification supervision of probate and conveyancing (Priority 9), it is clear that there are a number of inconsistencies in supervision of qualifying and newly-qualified notaries as compared and other legal professions, with the requirements on notaries falling short of those applied to other professions. This is not only an issue in the areas of probate and conveyancing, but across the board. It is hoped that the wider supervision issue will be addressed, not just the issues relating to probate and conveyancing services. Notaries cannot be (or be seen to be) the weak link in the chain!

In addition, it is also clear that there are some fundamental gaps in the qualification requirements themselves as compared to other legal professions, including (i) basic taxation; (ii) accounts (including client accounting); (iii) professional ethics and conduct; (iv) client care and professional Standards; (v) communication skills; and (vi) financial and business skills, all of which are studied for qualification as a solicitor (iv, v and vi as part of the compulsory Professional Skills Course. It is hoped that the lack of such qualifications can be addressed as part of this Priority or that the Priority can be widened to encompass them(albeit that the latter may be addressed to an extent of Priority 6 (professional ethics), depending on the scope of what this involves). This is an extremely important issue – notaries should not be any less well-qualified than any other legal profession in England and Wales.

As to professional ethics (Priority 6), it is welcome that progress is being made with this priority. However, it is noted that the consultation states that the Faculty Office has published guidance on "the importance of independence and impartiality". However, the guidance published was, in fact, on independence only (and in the context of it non-delegable duties), not on impartiality. Impartiality and how it applies in practice is something that is not always well understood by students or practitioners. This is especially the case in areas such as conveyancing and probate in which notaries may have practised in the past as solicitors, where fundamentally different professional duties apply from those which a notary must comply with when practising in the same areas.

Proper compliance with the duty of impartiality is an area that needs monitoring across the board. It is hoped that the duty of independence will be comprehensively addressed in any materials issued by the Faculty Office in due course. It is also hoped that this is a key focus in inspections currently and that it will be a key focus also in the planned review of inspections work (Priority 7), especially in the areas of conveyancing and probate. Clearly any action by a notary in, for example, a conveyancing matter which is in any way partisan or aimed at benefitting the interests only of one party to a transaction (as a solicitor would do) would be a serious breach of the notary's core duty of impartiality and any instances of this ought to be assessed an addressed as part of an inspection.

4. **Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?**

I would just make the final comment that it is very welcome that a number of sets of rules have received comprehensive review in recent years and it is welcome that the commentary on Priority 4 confirms that the new consolidated rules will be formally reviewed in the next in the next business plan triennium period.

However, it is hoped that other disparate sets of rules can also be reviewed in the next business plan triennium period. For example, the Prevention of Money Laundering Rules 2008 and Notification of Address Rules 1982 could easily be integrated into other sets of rules to reduce the overall number of sets of rules.

In addition, the one set of rules that has not been subject to comprehensive review is the Notaries Practice Rules. While they have been subject to iterative amendment over the years, at their core, they are over 35 years old. A comprehensive review of these rules would be welcomed in the next business plan triennium period so that they can be expanded and updated as necessary, as well as amendments made to those parts of the rules which were based on the Solicitors Practice Rules of the late 1980s and which do not, ultimately, sit comfortably with the different professional duties that notaries have as compared to solicitors.

J, a notary

Response #3
Thanks for the new link to the amended consultation document.

Questions about the proposed business plan and the proposed practising certificate fee/levy
1 Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?
YES

2 Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.
YES

3 Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?
I thought they were very clearly explained in the consultation document.

4 Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?
NO

Thanks

L, a notary

Response #4
Looks like an excellent job is being done

Thank you

M, a notary

Response #5
I respond to the above, as follows:

1. Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?

Yes

2. Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.

Yes

3. Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?

The progress appears reasonable, having regard to resources available and is prioritising matters appropriately.

4. Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?

Yes – I assume that the reference to tables 2 and 3 should be to 1 and 2 and, if so, I cannot see any difference between the two, to which a preference can be indicated, but perhaps I have missed something.

In Annex II, as there are 45 appointments budgeted for in each of the years (and I assume also some appointments in the previous account year) should the total number of certificates, and corresponding income, not be proportionately increased, based upon historical data showing the proportion of appointees who actually practise, or is the projected position that those appointments will be balanced by non-renewals?

P, a notary

Response #6

My responses are....

1 Yes
2 Yes
3 No
4 No

A, a notary

Response #7

Questions about the proposed business plan and the proposed practising certificate fee/levy

1. Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?

- PCF, Yes
- **Contingency Fund, No**

2. Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.

- It is a bad idea to have a nil-rate contingency fund fee (or contribution) BECAUSE,
- it is good discipline each year to put something aside, even if it is very small , say £20 (which would be 2% of my PCF of £1K), minimum £10 maximum £30

- If/when there is a call on the fund, especially urgent/costs, we are used to the idea. But if the nil-rate continues for [10] years, there is a cohort who regard it as normal to have nil-rate, rather than a privilege
- save for rainy day
- safe is boring but it is safe

3. Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?

- No, looks to me the Master is doing a good job

4. Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?

- no

A, a notary

Response #8

1. I support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?

2. I agree the nil rate contingency fee.

3. I support the work over the past year.

4. I have no other comments

Thanks
R, a notary

Response #9

Answers to your questions as follows
1 Yes
2 Yes
3 No
4 No

A, a notary

Response #10

In response to the Consultation Questions about the proposed business plan and the proposed practising certificate fee/levy:

1 Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?

Yes.

2 Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please outline your reasons.

Yes.

3 Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?

Yes.

1. Review inspections work. The progress reported is "We have commissioned an external review of the current inspections regime". It is to be hoped that the external reviewer will seek input from notaries, as was the case with the DEI review. In particular, the lack of prompt feedback to the notary once an inspector's report has been submitted to the Faculty Office, which is causing stress to notaries and links closely with Wellbeing.

2. Wellbeing. Again, I hope there will be consultation on this important aspect, helping to identify the causes of stress in notaries, which are much wider than simply isolation.

3. Generally, my impression is that progress on the Master's priorities is being well communicated.

4 Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?

No.

J, a notary

Response #11

1 Do you support the proposal to maintain the 2026/27 PCF & contingency fund contributions at the same level as for the 2025/26 year?

Given the detail that is set out in the Consultation update and the trust I have as a notary in the Faculty Office (based on my personal experience), I support the proposal.

2 Specifically, do you agree the continued nil rate contingency fund fee? If not, please
outline your reasons.

I have no comment.

3 Do you have any comments about the progress made against the Master's priorities
set out in the 2025-2028 business plan?

Other than what is set out in point 4 below, nothing to comment on progress.

4 Do you have any comments on any other aspect of this consultation?

Two points which I'd like to comment on:

1) Item 13: Wales - I am a notary that practises and lives in Wales. The geographic area I encompass is rural in nature. Personally I do not see the need to significantly differentiate Wales from England. Wales has the same geographical issues and concerns as rural England - our area is very similar to say Cornwall, Dorset, Devon or the more northern counties. Other than the language, which I accept may require some thought and input into, I do not see the need to concentrate over and above, say, the concerns of clients in other rural areas of England. Culturally Wales is different but the law of England and Wales is the same when it comes to notarial work. You could say culturally the major cities of England are even more different that the rural areas of England (or Wales) - so the pressing need to be seen to 'serve' Wales is, in my view, illogical.

   Further, clients are used to having to travel for services in Wales; whether that be accountancy, legal, veterinary, notarial or even public services like (very sadly) Police Stations and or Courts. To give some context, I live in a geographic area that had a Police Station and a Court in the major towns around us. Now we have one Police Station that is some 35 minutes away and one Court that is 50 minutes away. For those further afield from our town (to the north), the travel to a Police Station and Court can be in excess of 1 hour and 30 minutes. The same applies to banks and post offices.

   I am personally willing to add more context or support in this area if required. I have been a member of the Law Society board for Wales but have decided to give others opportunities. I therefore have some capacity to support the profession if required.

2) Item 14: Artificial intelligence and new technologies

   I have written on this subject to the Faculty Office and explained my very real concerns - particularly with regard to remote appearance and the use of ai / deepfake.

   My personal view born from experience, interest and knowledge in this area is that the average notary in England and Wales does not understand the technological basis of an electronic signature, an electronic notarial act, of remote appearance, of controlling the signature platform nor of the significant advancement in ai and deepfake technology.

   Indeed, I would also go as far as saying that the legal profession generally, including HM Land Registry (with say the signing of transfers and other property deeds electronically) is very poorly understood and the risks associated with the electronic signing process very poorly understood - which in turn creates a significant risk to the profession and to the legal industry more widely.

   There is a drive to do business online, a drive to have electronic signatures and that drive is being pushed heavily by signatory providers such as Adobe or Docusign etc - but also a drive by business to be more efficient. Unfortunately efficiency does come up against bureaucratic processes - and the notarial act is a bureaucratic process that requires consideration by the notary as a professional and validation of certain features to create the act. I do not think the notarial professional should bow to the pressures of Government or of business to despatch the very fundamentals of the profession. Yet, with respect, allowing remote signatures and remote notarisation does despatch with that fundamental approach and therefore weight that is attached to a notarial act from a notary in England and Wales. I do not think the guidance or the Chapters 25 and 26 in the Code of Practice go as far or as strong as it should in this regard.

I do not think this is a luddite view, or a professional trying to maintain the status quo. It is a view of a relative (!) young professional with significant experience in IT, technology and setting up electronic law firms coupled with the experience of being a notary and a solicitor in this ever changing world.

E, a notary

Response #12

I appreciate that this consultation closed yesterday but I have been on holiday and only just had chance to read the consultation document.

1. I support the proposal.

2. I agree to the continued nil rate contingency fund fee.

3. I would like to thank the Faculty Office team for their diligent efforts. The priorities and progress are, as ever, clearly set out and understandable, and it seems that good progress has been, and is being, made. I am particularly keen to see the insurance consultation document as this is an area where I feel out of my depth in what is/isn't appropriate (and insurance documents are not drafted as clearly and concisely as Faculty Office paperwork!).

4. No further comments.

E, a notary